

Fact Sheet: Prison Victimization



**CRIME VICTIMS'
INSTITUTE**

**COLLEGE OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE
SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY**

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Prison Victimization: The Facts

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What is the Prison Victimization?

Prison victimization can be defined as victimization against incarcerated individuals in the criminal penal system.

Have you Heard?

- Approximately 251,000 residents in Texas are incarcerated [1]
- Sexual misconduct is the 2nd most commonly reported victimization within the prison system [2]
- 42% of sexual misconducts in prison were committed by correctional staff in 2018 [3]
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual men and women are 10 times as likely to be sexually victimized by other incarcerated individuals and 2.6 times as likely to be victimized by correctional staff [4]

What are the Consequences?

The consequences of being victimized within a prison setting are multi-faceted. Many victims experience shame, fear, and stigmatization because of their incarceration circumstances [2]. Additionally, many incarcerated individuals have a prior history of sexual, physical, and emotional abuse, which may exacerbate mental health issues, such as post-traumatic stress disorder and stress, and increase the risk for violent perpetration [5].

Barriers to Help-Seeking

Some barriers that incarcerated individuals face when seeking help include the lack of mental health services for victims, instances of retaliation after reporting their victimization, and unsuccessful investigations of reported victimization [4,6]. Additionally, solitary confinement is disproportionately used against LGBTQ+ individuals hindering their ability to receive help [6].

How to Help

- Trauma-responsive programming to serve incarcerated individuals emphasizing inclusive language and values
- Elimination of solitary confinement
- Provide resources and prevention strategies to correctional staff
- Increase the use of external research and oversight committees

Resources

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Texas

- Texas Department of Criminal Justice Reentry and Integration Division
<https://www.tdcj.texas.gov/divisions/rid/index.html>
(877) 887-6151
- Texas Criminal Justice Coalition
<https://www.countyresources.texasdcjc.org>
(512) 441-8123

National

- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration
<https://www.samhsa.gov>
(800) 662-4357
- The National Reentry Resource Center
<https://www.nationalreentryresourcecenter.org>
(866) 536-8686

References

- [1] Jones, A. (2018). *Correctional control 2018: Incarceration and supervision by state*. <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/correctionalcontrol2018.html>
- [2] Purvis, D. E., & Blanco, M. (2020). Police sexual violence: Police brutality, #MeToo, and masculinities. *California Law Review*, 108, 1487–1531. <https://doi.org/10.15779/Z38XD0QZ2V>
- [3] Buehler, D. (2021). *Sexual victimization reported by adult correctional authorities, 2016-2018*. Bureau of Justice Statistics. <https://bjs.ojp.gov/content/pub/pdf/svraca1618.pdf>
- [4] Beck, A. J., Berzofsky, M., Caspar, R., & Krebs, C. (2013). *Sexual victimization in prisons and jails reported by inmates, 2011-12*. Bureau of Justice Statistics. <https://bjs.ojp.gov/content/pub/pdf/svpjri1112.pdf>
- [5] Jones, M.S., Worthen, M.G.F., Sharp, S. F., McLeod, D. A. (2018). Life as she knows it; The effects of adverse childhood experiences on intimate partner violence among women prisoners. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 85, 68-79. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2018.08.005>
- [6] Prison Justice League & The Texas Association Against Sexual Assault. (2016). *A Texas-sized failure: Sexual Assaults in Texas Prisons*. Texas Association Against Sexual Assault. http://taasa.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/BK_A-Texas-Sized-Failure-SA-in-TX-Prisons-Final.pdf

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Resources

- Texas Abuse Hotline (suspicions of abuse, neglect, and exploitation of children, adults with disabilities, or people 65 +) <https://www.txabusehotline.org/Login/>
800-252-5400
- Texas Council on Family Violence <https://tcfv.org/survivor-resources/>
- Texas Association Against Sexual Assault <https://taasa.org/get-help/>
- National Domestic Violence Hotline 800-799-7233
- National Sexual Assault Hotline 800-656-4673
- National Human Trafficking Hotline 888-373-7888
- Aging and Disability Resource Center 855-937-2372
- Victim Connect Resource Center 855-484-2846
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 988